



OPERATION SALAM NEWS

No. 1 - December 1988

PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENTS

Funding a relief and recovery programme for well over a billion dollars was never going to be easy in the troubled circumstances of Afghanistan today. Despite the immediate and generous response of a number of donors, only US\$3 million out of some US\$97 million pledged had actually been received in the Afghanistan Emergency Trust Fund by the end of August 1988 and barely US\$1 million more by the time of the Pledging Conference on 12th October 1988. Substantially more had, of course, been contributed in earmarked donations to agencies or in the form of aid in kind but little enough was available to the Co-ordinator himself to meet newly-identified needs in the constantly changing situation with which the international community was faced. The Trust Fund was created to give the Co-ordinator "flexibility of response" - easy to argue but without funds rather like asking a boxer to manoeuvre with his hands tied behind his back. Plenty of footwork but no punch. No surprise then that, with the basic administrative requirements of 'La Pelouse' also to be met, not a single Trust Fund project had been approved by mid-October for implementation in the field.

Fortunately, however, the hiatus in project implementation gave both the Co-ordinator's Office and its partners among United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations alike the opportunity to do some sound programme planning in advance. Too often in the past crisis planning and crisis management have had to go hand in hand with no breathing space for the United Nations system to adjust and respond in a properly co-ordinated way. The interim between the launching of the Secretary-General's appeal on 10th June and the Pledging Conference four months later on 12th October gave us, in retrospect, an invaluable opportunity to organize, to plan and to prepare on the basis of the valuable groundwork which had already been done under UNDP auspices earlier in the year. During this period also, UNHCR was able to initiate with funds it had received outside the Trust Fund, a number of preliminary projects for the refugee repatriation programme, ranging from procurement for the pre-positioning of supplies to the establishment of an operational support mechanism to cover transportation, handling and storage needs. In addition, the Co-ordinator approved over 20 small but essential emergency agricultural assistance projects for implementation by non-governmental organizations operating cross-border from Pakistan into Afghanistan. These projects covered the supply of seeds, fertilizers and other agricultural inputs to increase the availability

of basic foodstuffs in 13 Afghan provinces by the spring of 1989 - a vital pre-requisite if the refugees from those provinces are to be encouraged to return.

From mid-October onwards, it has been "full steam ahead" even if the sums at the Co-ordinator's immediate disposal have still been modest ones. Over US\$7 million have now been allocated, including over a million to FAO for the purchase or multiplication of seeds for the next sowing season and a million dollars to UNICEF for immunisation, primary health care, sanitation and related programmes. Similar or larger amounts have been allocated to WHO for the development of health programmes and assistance to the disabled and to UNDP for rural development, rural reconstruction programmes inside Afghanistan and direct support to small relief and recovery projects carried out by NGOs. The emphasis has been directly placed on "action-oriented" programmes having an immediate impact in meeting basic needs.

There is much else "in the pipeline" and, of course, funds earmarked by donors to be paid via the Trust Fund to agencies direct are additional to those which donors have left to the Co-ordinator to allocate and which have provided the resources for the projects outlined above. UNHCR has benefitted particularly from a number of earmarked allocations as has WFP from donations in kind. But what is being done remains only a small beginning and the task of translating pledges into contributions and of eliciting more pledges will be a major one in the months ahead. The grand total of all contributions received - earmarked or otherwise - is still only about US\$14.5 million while each day existing needs become more pressing and new demands arise.

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EDITORIAL

"Salam" means "greetings" as well as "peace" in a large part of the world, including Afghanistan. It has been chosen as the name of our operation for both these reasons.

The Secretary-General considered it vital from the outset that the co-ordinated effort of the international community in addressing the Afghan crisis should have an identity, not just for those wishing to support it - agencies, donors, the public and the media - but even more importantly, among the Afghans themselves.

"Operation Salam" was launched at the beginning of our Pledging Conference in New York on 12 October, 150 days after my appointment. Much has happened in that short period. Offices have been established in Geneva and the region, a core staff assembled, inter-agency missions undertaken inside Afghanistan and key programmes initiated. The Pledging Conference itself was a remarkable event: almost US\$800 million was pledged on one day. You can read about these developments in this newsletter.

I am often asked by people who follow events in Afghanistan on the television and in the press how our humanitarian operation can expect to succeed. The many security problems and the military situation are widely covered. In spite of the breakthrough represented by the Geneva Accords, the political situation remains complex and no easy solutions are in sight. Armed conflict within Afghanistan has continued and hundreds of people are being killed or wounded each week.

FIRST INTERAGENCY ASSESSMENT MISSIONS INSIDE AFGHANISTAN

Direct fact-finding inside Afghanistan is essential to assess the real needs of the population and to start planning for rehabilitation and reconstruction. One of the first priorities of the Co-ordinator was therefore to send missions to areas which are considered to be relatively safe and where operational activities can start. In consultation with the Executive Heads of UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP and WFP, the decision was taken to send three small missions as soon as possible to three different areas of Afghanistan. The Secretary-General authorized the missions when he was satisfied that all parties concerned had been consulted and informed about their purpose, timing and composition. The missions were given the following names: Salam 1 from Iran into Afghanistan, Salam 2 from Kabul to the Herat region and Salam 3 from Pakistan.

Salam 2

This was the first mission to take place (early September 1988); and also the first substantive United Nations inter-agency mission outside Kabul in the last 9 years. The mission travelled by air from Kabul to Herat and

But there is another story, less well known. It is of the patience and courage of many millions of Afghans who have been the victims of almost ten years of fighting. They live both within and outside the country, and most of them are women and children. It is impossible to under-estimate what they have endured while keeping their indomitable spirit and optimism very much alive.

Afghans fleeing their homes have received remarkable hospitality and comfort from distant neighbours sometimes even poorer than themselves. But much remains to be done to support them in shouldering their burden. Higher education is severely lacking among the younger generation of Afghan refugees and there are serious gaps in human resource development in the health, administrative, technical and other fields. A major operation is urgently needed to prepare Afghan refugees for the journey home, to make their passage secure, to avoid unnecessary hardships on the way and to reconstruct their homes and livelihood once they have returned. The plight of those who remained behind during the years of conflict, particularly that of the internally-displaced is often even worse. Virtually every element of the rural infrastructure, from roads and bridges to schools, hospitals, and agriculture will have to be rebuilt.

There is much to be done, and no time to lose. But the international community has now begun to join together to meet in a co-ordinated and effective manner, the basic needs of the Afghan people and in doing so we help to pave the way towards a lasting peace.

Nadreddin Afshar

was able to make an initial assessment of the situation in the city and surrounding rural areas. In spite of a very tense situation, the team did not encounter any direct security hazard. The authorities concerned granted them total freedom of movement and contact with the Afghan population.

Some of the salient findings of the mission:

War damage

- About 40% of the city of Herat was totally destroyed during the fierce fighting of the years 1983-1985.
- Roads inside and outside the city are damaged but usable.
- 60% of the trees around Herat have been cut down for security reasons.
- Virtually all buildings along the first 15 km of main roads leading out of Herat have also been destroyed.
- Out of 1,300 villages located in Herat Province, 600 have been either seriously damaged or totally destroyed.

- On the other hand, the main hospital, the city schools, the mosque and 60% of the market have not been severely affected.
- 60% of all surgery patients in the provincial hospitals are war wounded.

Mines

During the last 5 years the Provincial Hospital has conducted 373 amputations mainly due to anti-personnel mines. The great majority of amputees were children below 15 years. Some 750 other amputations have been done by other medical facilities during the same period.

- No artificial limb facilities are available in Herat.
- There are no information campaigns on the dangers of anti-personnel mines.

Returnees

According to the Government of Afghanistan, from January 1987 to August 1988 some 60,000 persons have been officially registered as returnees from Iran. An additional 20,000 are said to have spontaneously returned without passing through the registration points. The majority (37,000) of the registered returnees have settled in Herat province but the city is also a transit point for refugees moving on to other areas.

Agriculture

Extensive damage to the rural infrastructure is reported. Hundreds of irrigation canals, *karez*es (traditional underground irrigation systems), wells, bridges, culverts and rural roads have been destroyed. Irrigated acreage has dropped to just over 50% of prewar levels. Agricultural production has dropped by up to 50% in some areas. Wheat production is said to cover only 60% of basic minimum requirements. A severe shortfall is likely to occur if large numbers of refugees return.

Education

The school system has practically collapsed. The majority of schools have been destroyed. Many others are seriously damaged and have little, if any, teaching aids, school books or furniture. Primary school teachers are very rare. Some 400 are reported to have been killed.

Health

The health and nutrition situation is critical. Women and children are most severely affected. Basic health care facilities which still exist have little or no drugs and supplies. In the rural areas there is only one doctor per 50,000 inhabitants. Infant mortality in the Herat province is estimated at 185 per 1,000 live births. 85% of child deaths are caused by diarrhoea and lack of immunization.

The findings of Salam 2 show the magnitude of the effort required for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Herat area. Specialized agencies of the United Nations system are currently preparing more detailed plans for implementation as soon as the situation permits.

Salam 3

In mid-October 1988, mission Salam 3 entered Afghanistan from Chitral in Pakistan by crossing on foot a 5,000 metre pass in the Hindukush mountains which leads into the Panjshir. From there the mission has proceeded to several valleys in eastern and central Afghanistan. As we go to press the mission is writing up its findings and a full report will appear in the next Newsletter.

Salam 1

Mission Salam 1 from the Iranian border to areas in western Afghanistan is planned to take place in the near future.



Young war victim, Herat. In the background, the mission Salam 2 vehicles.

Extracts of telexes from Salam 2

aaa Mission has just returned safely Kabul from Herat province.

bbb We were able to move rather extensively and had direct contact with local population, local council leaders and potential operational partners.

ccc We visited villages outside Herat using loudspeakers, U.N. flags and white jeeps without any escort in order to indicate our peaceful intentions. Found all parties concerned, after initial moment of hesitation, open and very eager to explain needs and show war damages. We were therefore able to collect large amount up to date info.

ddd GOA local authorities were aware that this is first U.N. substantive mission outside Kabul in 9 years and co-operated fully in respecting our wishes to have access to all people and areas even outside Herat.

eee U.N. team worked very well and morale high even on occasional moments of war tension.

fff Mortar and machine gun can be heard day and night not far from city centre.

ggg urban population has suffered very much from bombings, even recently.



The high level Interagency team in front of the aircraft made available to the Co-ordinator by the Swiss Federal Government for its mission to Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan (27-30 May, 1988). The team comprised top officials from FAO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

LA PELOUSE NEWS

Six months after its establishment in mid-May, "Operation Salam" now has a full-time staff of 25 divided between Geneva and two countries in the region, Iran and Pakistan.

The Geneva staff are organized into three main departments: the Co-ordinator's Office itself, responsible for fund-raising and external relations; a Programming and Monitoring section, responsible for identifying projects and partners within the international community and for producing progress reports; and the Finance and Administration section, for budgetary, managerial and personnel control.

Within the region, Chiefs of Mission have already been identified to represent the Co-ordinator in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. A field office has been established in Islamabad and Martin Barber, formerly Director of the British Refugee Council, has taken up his post. The Co-ordinator's full-time staff is unlikely to grow to any appreciable extent. This is not merely because of the budgetary constraints faced by the United Nations system. Rather, it expresses the basic philosophy of "Operation Salam" - to have a small core staff and to tap the expertise of the United Nations system, of the NGOs of independent experts and scholars and, most importantly, of the Afghan people in facing the challenge ahead.

Housed in the villa "La Pelouse" at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, the headquarters of "Operation Salam" has seen much activity over the last few months. The Secretary-General, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar visited the building, still being refurbished, on October 14th, and was briefed on current programmes by the staff. Other distinguished visitors have included the French Secretary of State for Humanitarian Affairs, Bernard Kouchner; the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, Abdul

Sattar; United States Assistant Secretary of State, Richard Williamson as well as many of the Geneva-based Permanent Representatives of Member States to the United Nations. The Executive Heads of a number of United Nations agencies, including William Draper Jean-Pierre Hocké and James Ingram have also met the Co-ordinator at La Pelouse. Inter-agency meetings of staff representing over twenty organizations concerned with Afghanistan have been held regularly since May. Non-governmental organizations and journalists are regular and welcome visitors.

The Co-ordinator's own travel schedule has been punishing. In the first six months he has made two visits to the region, four to New York, and has visited major donor capitals, including Berne, Brussels, London, Moscow, Paris, Rome, Stockholm, Tokyo and Washington. Within three weeks of his appointment on 11 May, he had travelled 50,000 kilometres in the Afghan cause.

As the immediate demands of establishing a new organization recede and "Operation Salam" develops co-ordinated programmes, more of the staff will move to the region. The Co-ordinator is committed to a decentralized approach aimed at maximum flexibility by responding to priorities and needs as they emerge over the coming months.

OPERATION SALAM GLOSSARY

The following is a selection of key-words and phrases commonly used in this Newsletter.

ACBAR: The Agency Co-ordinating Body for Afghan Relief

ACBAR is an independent co-ordinating body of non-governmental organizations operating from Pakistan or inside Afghanistan which provide humanitarian aid to the people of Afghanistan. ACBAR was created in 1988 and is based in Peshawar, Pakistan.

The Afghanistan Emergency Trust Fund

Name of the Fund created by the Secretary-General for the Office of the Co-ordinator to receive contributions made in response to the Secretary-General's appeal for Afghanistan.

The Alliance

The Islamic Unity of Afghan Mujahidin was formed in Peshawar, Pakistan in 1985 by the seven Afghan resistance parties.

1. Harakat-e-Inqalab-i-Islami (Islamic Revolutionary Movement) led by Mohammed Nabi Mohammadi.
2. Hezb-i-Islami (Islamic Party) led by Yunis Khalis.
3. Hezb-i-Islami (Islamic Party) led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

4. Itihad-i-Islami (Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan) led by Abduli-Rab Rasoul Sayyaf.

5. Jebh-i-Nejat-Milli (National Liberation Front) led by Sebghatullah Mojadeddi.

6. Jamiat-i-Islami (Islamic Society) led by Burhanuddin Rabbani.

7. Mahaz-i-Nijat Milli (National Islamic Front) led by Sayed Ahmed Gailani.

Consolidated Reports on Afghanistan

The result of a collaborative effort of all the agencies of the United Nations system. The first Report was issued by the Office of the Co-ordinator in September 1988 and provides an assessment of the situation in Afghanistan, identifying sectoral needs, priorities, projects and programmes. Up-dates will be issued regularly.

The Co-ordinator

The position of Co-ordinator for the United Nations Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes relating to Afghanistan was created on 11 May 1988. Sadruddin Aga Khan was appointed on that date by the Secretary-General and entrusted with a mandate to provide leadership among UN agencies and non-governmental organizations, to enhance effectiveness, to eliminate duplication and to increase the confidence of donor countries in the responsiveness of the United Nations system.

Earmarked funds

Pledges made by countries or governments of funds allocated for a specific purpose (health, agriculture, etc.) or for a specific agency of the United Nations.

The Geneva Accords

Agreements on the Settlement of the Political situation relating to Afghanistan. Bilateral Agreement between the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the principles of mutual relations, in particular on non-interference and non-intervention. The Geneva Accords were signed on 14 April 1988 by the Foreign Ministers of the Governments of Afghanistan and of Pakistan, as well as by those of the Soviet Union and of the United States as Guarantor States.

Inter-Agency meetings

The Co-ordinator convenes regular meetings (every 2-3 months) of those responsible for Afghanistan in the various UN agencies. These provide an opportunity for the co-ordination of plans and programmes to be carried out by UN Agencies.

NGOs, PVOs and Volags,

Abbreviations for Non-Governmental Organizations, Private Voluntary Organizations and Voluntary Organizations respectively. Organizations founded by, and in large part funded by, private individuals and the public for specific objectives. There are over 100 NGOs active in providing humanitarian aid to Afghan refugees in health, education, shelter and other fields.

Operation Salam

The name attributed on 12 October 1988, at the first Pledging Conference held in New York, to the broad co-operation and co-ordination effort initiated by the Secretary-General following the signing of the Geneva Accords on 14 April 1988. Operation Salam will make available, through the United Nations, humanitarian aid for the rehabilitation, reconstruction and economic recovery of Afghanistan.

SWABAC: Southern and Western Afghanistan and Baluchistan Association for Co-ordination

SWABAC is an association of non-governmental organizations currently operating humanitarian aid programmes in Baluchistan and inside Afghanistan. It was created to address the unique problems and needs in the southern and western sectors of Afghanistan. SWABAC was created in 1988 and is based in Quetta, Pakistan.

UNVs - United Nations Volunteers.

The UNV programme was created in 1971 by the UN General Assembly to channel professionally qualified men and women, on a volunteer basis, into development activities calling for middle and upper-level operational expertise.

Villa la Pelouse

Headquarters of the Office of the Co-ordinator and of Operation Salam, close to the Palais des Nations in Geneva. It was acquired from Mr. James Forstall (USA) by the League of Nations in 1930. It served as the residence of Sir and Lady E. Drummond, then Secretary-General of the League of Nations. Later the Villa was used by the Belgian, Canadian, Danish, French, Norwegian, Dutch, Swedish and Turkish Permanent Missions. From 1966 to 1969 it served as the residence of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Mr. R. Prebisch. The Villa was later used by the Linguistic Services of the United Nations. It is now under renovation with funds provided from the Regular Budget of the United Nations.

UNILOG

From April 1989 onwards the World Food Programme will no longer distinguish between programmes in Afghanistan and refugee needs in Pakistan and Iran. In future, food aid will be channelled to Afghan people regardless of whether they are returnees, internally displaced persons, members of vulnerable groups or refugees still in other countries.

It has become increasingly clear to WFP and donors alike that past distinctions between recipients of aid can no longer usefully be maintained and that the different programmes will have to be amalgamated. As the WFP secretariat has written in a report to its governing body -

"... In a situation where the needs of the refugees have to be met not only while they are in asylum in neighbouring countries but also when they choose to return, it is necessary to have a programme that incorporates flexibility to meet alternative scenarios regarding the extent and timing of such return." WFP has now calculated the food aid requirements of all operations involving Afghans during 1989 as follows:

Contribution Requirements
(metric tonnes)

Activity	Wheat	Rice	Edible Oil	Sugar	Dried skim milk	Tea	Total
Feeding in Pakistan	363,600		21,825	14,625	2,925	1,125	404,100
Feeding in Iran	9,207	864	1,122				11,193
Food-for-work in Afghanistan	91,250		5,475	2,737	3,550	547	103,559
Humanitarian support in Afghanistan	41,962		10,050		684		52,696
Grand total							571,948

The total cost of providing the food, including ocean freight and overland transport is estimated at US\$219 million. A first contribution to the new consolidated Afghan programme has already been received and WFP is in the process of contracting delivery to Karachi.

The United Nations Logistical and Transport Operation (UNILOG) will play a central role in organizing the delivery of food to Afghanistan. WFP, and its operational partner UNHCR, are now ready to begin operations. The Manager, Ramiro Lopez da Silva, and several key officers have been appointed and are already in office. UNILOG staff have over the past few months established close links with the commercial sector in Pakistan to ensure that adequate storage and commercial transport capacity can be made available. The operation will also involve the management of a minor trucking fleet of its own.

CO-ORDINATOR'S VISIT TO MOSCOW

The Co-ordinator travelled to Moscow on 14 and 15 November for a first round of discussions on the Soviet participation in the multilateral humanitarian and economic assistance programmes relating to Afghanistan. During the talks the Soviet authorities confirmed that their 400 million rouble pledge was additional to ongoing bilateral programmes for Afghanistan. They added that relief supplies already pre-positioned inside the country or along its northern border could be released immediately, if the Co-ordinator was confronted with urgent needs, and that these could be used in all provinces of Afghanistan.

The Soviet authorities provided information on the four categories of assistance constituting their pledge, namely:

- commodities (e.g. wheat and other foodstuffs, medicines, motor vehicles, diesel oil, timber, etc.)
- project assistance
- potential revenues in hard currency to be derived from the transit of goods and supplies to be provided by other donors, across Soviet territory
- fixed assets and infrastructure to be left behind after the Soviet withdrawal.

The Alliance of Soviet Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies could provide for an effective interface at the field level in the handing over of Soviet assistance and supplies to United Nations teams for further distribution inside Afghanistan. United Nations agencies with experience and operational capacity at the field level, such as UNHCR and WFP, would be asked to organize the necessary in-country logistics to receive, store and distribute Soviet assistance through locally identified partners. Since there was no cash component immediately available within the Soviet pledge, the principle of generating the necessary revenues to cover in-country transportation costs through the sale of certain lower priority items was considered and it was agreed that this would be explored further. It was agreed that as an initial step, efforts would be made towards organizing humanitarian relief convoys under the Operation Salam flag in selected areas of Afghanistan.

Finally, it was agreed that a continuing dialogue on the implementation of the Soviet contribution was required. The Co-ordinator's Office, in consultation with the other lead Agencies (UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, WHO, UNDP and FAO) will therefore field a first technical mission to Moscow from 12 to 14 December 1988 to further discuss in detail the utilization of specific elements of the Soviet pledge and lay the groundwork for immediate operational measures that need to be taken.

PLEDGES MADE AS OF 28 NOVEMBER 1988

US\$ million

Australia	16.26
Austria	2.0
Bangladesh	0.005
Bulgaria	0.588
Cameroun	0.003
Canada	18.47
Denmark	9.88
EEC	25.03
Finland	5.65
France	14.02
Germany,	
Federal Republic of	28.40
Greece	2
Holy See	0.01
Ireland	0.1
Italy	29
Japan	60
Luxembourg	0.54
Mongolia	0.1
Netherlands	2.5
Norway	13.5
Spain	0.85
Sweden	19.01
Switzerland	2.6
Turkey	1
United Kingdom	18.1
USA	16.7
USSR	600
Yugoslavia	0.15
TOTAL	887.61

The sums reflect either cash or in kind contributions.

US\$800 MILLION IN ONE DAY

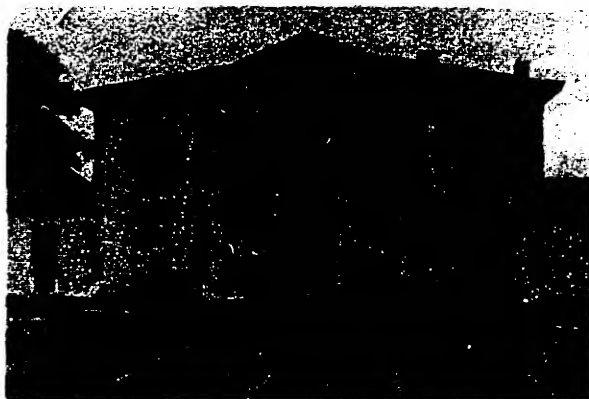
The Pledging Conference in response to the Secretary-General's Appeal was held in New York on 12 October. It was opened by the Secretary-General in the presence of the Co-ordinator as well as of William Draper, the Administrator of UNDP, James Ingram, the Executive Director of WFP, and Jean-Pierre Hocké, the High Commissioner for Refugees. There was an impressive turn-out of representatives of most of the United Nations agencies involved in addressing the Afghan situation.

The meeting began by the Secretary-General officially launching "Operation Salam". After brief statements by Executive Heads, donors announced their pledges. The most important pledge was that by the Soviet Union which by its size took the other participants by surprise. Never before has the Soviet Union made such a substantial contribution to the humanitarian activities of the United Nations. The pledge was described by the Soviet Ambassador as taking the form, among other things, of "free-deliveries from the USSR of consumer goods, including foodstuffs, clothes, footwear, linen, medical supplies, school appliances, fabrics etc. and free deliveries from the USSR of equipment and materials for constructing projects in various branches of the economy under the United Nations sponsored

programmes ...". Further details are being worked out between the Soviet authorities and United Nations agencies under the Co-ordinator's guidance.

Other generous pledges were made by a number of donors. Small but highly symbolic pledges were made at the Conference and in the following weeks. The United States Ambassador reaffirmed his Government's commitment to providing assistance to the people of Afghanistan and its support for the Co-ordinator's effort. The State Department has since advised the Co-ordinator of the substantial contribution it will make in 1989: US\$ 33.1 million in food aid to WFP, US\$ 20 million to UNHCR and US\$ 2 million for the de-mining programme.

Operation Salam is now faced with the task of ensuring that the sums pledged are swiftly transferred to the Afghanistan Emergency Trust Fund. As we go to press, all sums received in the Trust Fund have been committed. Further projects are being submitted all the time by United Nations agencies.



Villa La Pelouse, Headquarters of Operation Salam.

Operation Salam News is published bi-monthly by the Office of the Co-ordinator for Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programme relating to Afghanistan, Villa La Pelouse, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland, (tel. 34 60 11 or 34 17 37, telex 41 29 09, Fax 34 73 10). It is produced by: Antonio Donini, Michael Keating, Mastaneh Notz and Alan Simmance.

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United Nations



Nations Unies

Co-ordinator for United Nations
Humanitarian and Economic Assistance
Programmes relating to Afghanistan

Coordonnateur des programmes
d'assistance humanitaire et économique des
Nations Unies relatifs à l'Afghanistan

DE-MINING: A MULTI-NATIONAL EFFORT UNDERWAY

So many mines and other lethal ordnance are scattered throughout Afghanistan, not only on paths, roads and perimeter defences but also in fields where farmers graze livestock and cultivate crops. These remain as legacies of battle and pose a grave threat to returning refugees, internally-displaced persons and local residents alike, not to mention livestock.

To reduce the likelihood of Afghans returning to their home villages being killed or injured, they must be given proper information on how to recognize these dangers. This will require a large number of Afghan instructors in refugee centres and eventually inside Afghanistan to teach the people and especially the women and children, how mines and unexploded ordnance can be avoided, on the safety precautions they must take and on areas of special danger.

Following a multinational assessment effort by teams from France, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States the Office of the Co-ordinator will implement, during the coming weeks and months, a training and information programme on mine clearance. Based on the reports of the assessment teams, the programme will cover the following activities:

- (a) mass public education and information campaigns in mine recognition and avoidance for Afghan refugees as well as for internally-displaced persons and local residents within Afghanistan;
- (b) the training of carefully selected Afghans to dispose of mines and other unexploded ordnance;
- (c) first aid and emergency care training as well as an assessment of medical structures and procedures for victims of mines;
- (d) assistance to and rehabilitation of disabled Afghans including the wounded and handicapped;
- (e) a data-base including information on devices, implantation techniques and disposal procedures as well as on access roads and security conditions in Afghanistan.

The essential element of the mass public education and information campaign is simple training at two levels for both adults and children. Female instructors will be trained to reach Afghan women. The campaign will provide information by using posters, radio broadcasts, videos, tapes, films and plastic models of mines and other ordnance.

Training in the clearance of mines and other ordnance will be based on the expectation that most of the actual clearance work will be accomplished by the Afghan

people themselves. A selected group of Afghan volunteers, chosen by the Afghans themselves, will receive training from teams from different countries under the auspices of the United Nations.

Afghan instructors will, in turn, provide training to other Afghan ordnance clearance personnel. The training course for instructors will have a first aid component. Medical, surgical and transportation equipment will be provided for ordnance clearance teams and first aid posts established. The need for surgical units and rehabilitation centres for the disabled will also be assessed.



GUEST COLUMN THE ICRC AND AFGHANISTAN

In recent years, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has intensified its efforts and made repeated representations to all parties with a view to providing protection and assistance without discrimination to the victims of the Afghan conflict.

While ICRC surgical and rehabilitation activities for the war wounded have been stepped up in Pakistan, facilities for the treatment of the wounded and amputees have been established in Kabul. With regard to the protection of detainees, ICRC delegates based in Peshawar and Kabul have carried out increasingly frequent visits to a growing number of prisoners.

The ICRC will continue impressing upon all parties to the conflict the need to respect the fundamental provisions of international humanitarian law and in particular the physical and mental integrity of protected persons, whether wounded or in captivity, and of the civilian population.

In order to increase its protection and assistance work for conflict victims in Afghanistan, the ICRC wishes to extend the deployment of its delegates in the field while maintaining and strengthening the indispensable co-ordination between the Co-ordinator for United Nations Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes relating to Afghanistan and the ICRC in their respective and complementary activities for Afghan refugees and all conflict victims.

Cornelio Sommaruga
President
International Committee of the
Red Cross (ICRC)